

# The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY  
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—James Freeman Clarke.

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## THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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### A NEW YEAR HYMN.

Sunlight of the heavenly day,  
Mighty to revive and cheer,  
Bless our yet untrodden way,  
    Lead us through the entered year.  
Where the shades of death we see,  
Let Thy living brightness be;  
Let it speed our lingering feet;  
Let it shine on all we meet.  
While before our chastened gaze  
Earthly pleasures fade and fail,  
Thou, the Light of all our days,  
    Thou, our steadfast glory,—hail!

Forward though the path be hid;  
Though we pass the lurking foe;  
Though the sound of war forbid,  
Girt with gladness, let us go,—  
Bold in Thy protecting care,  
Strong to prove Thee faithful there,  
Through the desert or the sea,  
On, to reign in life with Thee.

Ah, with more than fearless heart  
Homeward be our faces set;  
Show us in our present part  
Wealth we have not measured yet.

Open Thou beneath our tread  
Springs the distance could not show;  
From the holy Fountain Head  
Let them rise where'er we go.  
Rather give us eyes to see,  
Love awake to love in Thee,

Hearts that, trusting in Thy care,  
Find its traces everywhere.  
Teach us, as we pass along,  
In the shining of Thy face,  
Many a sweet thanksgiving song,  
Even in a dreary place.

Lord of All! we cannot know  
What our paths may yet unfold;  
But the part that Love would show,—  
Wise to save us,—Thou hast told.  
By our hearts' unmeasured price,  
By Thy lifelong sacrifice,  
By Thy death to set us free,  
Lead us on to joy in Thee;—  
On, to greet the perfect day,  
Blessed end of time and strife,—  
On through all the shining way,—  
Brightness of our human life!

—A. L. Waring.

### A REFUGE AND STRENGTH.

"God is our refuge and our strength."—Ps.  
xvi. 1.

There are two things a father can do  
for a child: he can protect him from  
danger, he can give him the necessary  
means for self-protection. Every wise  
father will do both. In many cases he  
will respect the weakness of the child,  
and, while the storm howls by or the  
battle rages, he is content to keep the  
little one in shelter and in ignorance, as  
a mountain shepherd covers a lamb with  
his mantle and carries it blinded along  
the edge of the precipice. But also there  
are many occasions when the wise father  
will not permit his children to remain  
passive and dependent under the stress  
of difficulty. He encourages them to ac-  
tion and strife. Less anxious to calm  
their fears than to urge them to self-  
defence, he permits them to see the full  
magnitude of their peril. Both of these  
cases are paralleled in the dealings of  
the divine Father with ourselves.

In regard to many dangers with which  
we are surrounded, it is obvious that,  
owing to our weakness and ignorance, we  
can in no manner cope with them, and  
must often be unaware of their existence.  
Our finite human nature is thrown over  
us (like the mantle on the lamb), conceal-

ing wholly from our eyes the abysses by which we tread. The number and narrowness of our hairbreadth escapes we shall never know. By a slight exercise of the imagination we can easily discern the manifold perils to which we are ever liable. It is said that many persons studying for the first time the physiology of the human body are seized with distressful apprehensions. The vital processes are so delicate, it seems an even chance whether they continue or not. A slight humor in the eye, and behold, our sight is gone! The act of swallowing puts us on the edge of strangulation! At every violent effort or emotion it is a miracle that half our blood-vessels do not burst!

But these morbid reflections of the amateur anatomist are soon dispelled, not indeed by clearer knowledge, but by deeper trust. Our refuge from such thoughts is the general beneficence and wholesomeness of existence. From our immense ignorance of the laws of life we take refuge in a simple trust and acceptance of life itself. We fly from the particular to the universal, from the finite, partial facts to the all-embracing activity of God.

Every increase of knowledge uncovers to our limited vision a multitude of dangers. Our knowledge of astronomy, for example, shows this earth of ours as but a wandering atom in infinity. Who knows the spaces we explore and what they hold? Why not to-morrow a plunge into some comet's gaseous envelope, that should blast the earth like an exhalation from a chemist's retort?

Yet, what sound human mind ever seriously entertains such fears? As against such catastrophes we have no power of self-defence, we do not consider them. We take refuge in God. He calleth the stars by name. The starry heaven is His and He made it. There is no chance nor discord there. We sail with our little planet-barge through those unfathomable seas where planets and galaxies lie as islands and continents in the voiceless space, and we say that all is well. Feeble and dim is the little headlight of our human reason that peers into the darkness, and yet we have no fear. God is our refuge. We can trust the Author of the universe as against our imperfect knowledge of any portion of it. The sight of *parts* fills us with misgiving; our intuition of the *whole* restores our trust and makes us sane again.

Consider man as a spiritual being. Look into your own heart and discover there the possibilities of moral disorder, the knife-edge that severs virtue from vice, the multiplied ingenuity of sin, the slippery ease of descent, the strenuous requirements of good; will you not wonder that, in the frailty of our nature, any soul has won its way to holiness of life? Who that knows his own heart can but fear the powers of evil there? See the seeming success of selfishness and low aims. Who can say, of his own observation, that the wicked are "like chaff which the wind driveth away"?

In the press of this power of evil upon the soul, men take refuge in God. They believe that right is the stronger though they cannot prove it. They trust an overwhelming Righteousness. We have this feeling and this experience in our own lives. As the Apostle says, "Brethren, if our hearts accuse us, God is greater than our hearts." God, therefore, is the refuge of human souls against self-reproach. There is no doubt that increasing spiritual knowledge usually increases in men the sense of their own unworthiness. The self-complacent souls are not those that have in them the knowledge of God! Nor do we get our deepest acquaintance with the nature of sin from the brutal and degraded. Rather it is from apostles and martyrs, from the virgin-hearts of youth, from unworldly minds and untainted lips, that we hear the passionate voice of confession, the pleading prayer for divine forgiveness and help.

We take refuge from the burden of personal sinfulness in the deeper insight that we are the children of God, and that all the discipline of our failure and shame is intended not to destroy us, but to cast us more utterly upon the divine aid, and to bring us back, by wholesome suffering, to the way of God, Who desireth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.

God is our refuge, then, both where reason leads us into perplexity and where conscience betrays us into self-contempt. We love to feel

"God's greatness  
Flows around our incompleteness,—  
Round our restlessness, His rest."

It is the rest of the child in his Father's house, the sense of submission and dependence, of safety and peace, which men

may possess in the presence of war, danger, confusion, perplexity, when human nature feels its littleness, and feels itself floating in the unfathomable, yet knows itself all the while as dwelling in security under the protection of the faithful Creator.

But this passive element of faith demands fulfilment in an active element. God is our refuge. He is also our strength.

While in the thought of His perfect goodness and providence we escape the terrors of existence, yet to meet our lot as men and women we need such faith as gives not only calmness, but vigorous capacity for resistance and for effort. We need a *living* God, Whose goodness is not only in the whole, but in the parts, and can be manifested to us not only at the last day, but also now, in all the conflicts and difficulties of our present life. God's dealings with us in this regard are like that of the human father, who permits his child to see, meet, and resist the dangers to which he is exposed.

But He has not left us to unaided combat. God is our strength, and a *very present help* in time of trouble.

God has appointed to every man two forms of conflict, one with the outward conditions of life,—the strife with nature and circumstance,—and the other with sin in himself.

The conflict with nature we share with all other animals. It is our struggle for existence, owing to the difficulty of maintaining life upon this planet. Hence,—toil, sweat, anxiety, the pangs of poverty, the dread of destitution, which make the master passions of all those who share the average lot of mankind. All the operations of business are parts of this world-wide struggle.

How, in this kind of contest, is it true that God is our strength? In the sense that all victory must come through laying hold of some divine law. Only by stern loyalty to truth and fact does man's labor conquer. Man's strength in this contest is his grasp of truth, his exact obedience to the conditions in which he finds himself. It is in this conformity to the terms of the strife, this lawful striving for the mastery, that we achieve the health and sanity of our being. Through this process is God creating us.

Many people think of God only as Love, Mercy, and Forgiveness. But we must know Him also as Law and Truth. He

is the indwelling Cause of all our life. To be exempted from the battle of labor, from this strife of man with nature, is not a privilege, but a disease. How can men get knowledge of God or receive of God as their strength when they are living a life of unnatural idleness? It is when life is real, serious, forceful, intense, when courage is high and action enthusiastic, that God enters in. Or, rather,—He is already with us; for the whole order of life with its law is but an expression of His will; and the Soul of man, when fulfilling its true constitution as God has made it, then reflects His image, receives of His spirit, and is sustained by His life and power. The more spiritual life in us, the more activity of will and heart and mind, the more of the power of God which worketh in us to will and to do.

But, finally, God is our strength in the battle of the soul with sin. Whenever we resist an evil thought or whenever we do anything which is good, we are allying ourselves with Omnipotence. By evil choice we thwart, check, or deform the unfolding of the divine image within us; but let the evil resistance be withdrawn, let the will ally itself to righteousness, and the operation of the divine Life goes on enlarging.

What we ask of the sinful will is that it shall stand aside and let the Holy Spirit do its work. Hence it is that, once we set ourselves in line with goodness, and have hungered and thirsted after it, we are certain to be saved from the power of evil. Doing right, we have God with us. Loving righteousness, we are under the influence of life-giving and multiplying Power.

But—you may say—does not evil multiply also? Does not sin wax energetic with years? In a sense, yes. In our souls, evil confirmed by habit grows stronger, easier of commission, more difficult of suppression. But *there is no strength of God in it. All the laws of the universe are against it*; therefore, the more sin strengthens in the sinful heart, the weaker it becomes for battle with the realities of existence. The greater the sin, the greater the obstacles offered to committing it. When sin is finished, "it bringeth forth death." But righteousness is made stronger by every contact with the laws of existence. Within the soul it is aided by God; outside the soul it is aided by all the laws of the universe.

And God is our strength in the contest with sin, not only by reinforcing our wills within us, but also because from God to man there are ever-descending visions of higher righteousness and purer truth. No man has got so far in holiness but God, through the voice of conscience, can show him a better than his present attainment. He is our hope and inspiration. Whenever we are refreshed and stimulated by new incentives to goodness, such quickening is of God. *He leads us.* He sets before us a land of promise and comforts us with increasing visions of glory. Our God is an enlarging Giver. Following Him, we go from strength to strength. Could we feel in any due sense this glorious promise of our inheritance as children of God, we should move, not with languid acquiescence, but with eager haste, with passionate devotion, to take our places in the army of God. We should run and not be weary; we should walk and not faint.—*Theodore C. Williams.*

#### THE STILL HOUR.

The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue, ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim.  
The unwearied sun, from day to day,  
Does his Creator's power display,  
And publishes to every land  
The work of an Almighty Hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,  
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
And nightly to the listening earth  
Repeats the story of her birth;  
While all the stars that round her burn,  
And all the planets, in their turn,  
Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all  
Move round this dark, terrestrial ball!  
What though no real voice or sound  
Amid their radiant orbs be found!  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice,  
Forever singing, as they shine,—  
"The hand that made us is Divine."

—*Joseph Addison.*

One ought not to fear to approach God with a childlike love, Speak to Him in

prayer of all your wants, all your troubles; speak even of the disrelish you sometimes feel for His service. You cannot speak too freely or too trustfully to Him. He loves the simple and lowly; it is with them He converses. If you are of the number, lay aside all your lofty ideas, open your heart to Him and tell Him everything. After thus speaking to God, listen to Him, that He may impress upon you such virtues as shall please Him. Let all within you be silent, and *listen to Him*, and you will hear His voice in the depth of your soul.—*Fénelon.*

#### THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass., Tel. Quincy 1140.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Rev. William A. Alleyne is now at New Lisbon, Wisconsin.

#### PERSONAL.

Sara P. Bozemon, Geneva, Kansas, wishes to thank Miss C. L. Murdoch for "A Tale of a Lonely Parish." The sender's address was effaced.

#### OFFERS.

The Springfield Branch offers the following. Apply to Mrs. W. E. Hodge, 27 Biltmore Street, Springfield, Mass. *Outlook* for 1917-18; *Atlantic* for 1916-17-18; *Scribner's* for 1918; *Craftsman* for 1914; *Poems*, Tennyson; "Dream Life," Ik Marvel; "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," Maclaren; "Queen Mary," Tennyson; "Outre-Mer," Longfellow.

The Brookline (First Parish) Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. W. Suter, 116 Warren Street, Brookline, Mass. "Geographical Dictionary," McCulloch (2 vols.); "Classical Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, Mythology, and Geography," Smith; "Dictionary," Worcester; "History of the

Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century" (1844), Aubignin; "Centennial Biography of Men of Mark of Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania"; "Scenes from the Life of Our Saviour by the Poets and Painters," Griswold; "Ginseng," Kaens; "Poetical Works," Landon; "Second Book of Birds," Miller; "Women of the Scriptures," Wild; "Every-day Business for Women," Wilbur.

The following are small, light books, suitable for handling by invalids: "Tourmalin's Time Cheques," Anstey; "The Idiot," and "Mr. Bonaparte of Corsica," Bangs; "The Worst Man"; "Helen with the High Hand," Bennett; "When the Ship Comes Home," Besant; "Book of Good Cheer"; "The Way to Think and How to Remember," Conklin; "Sign of the Four," Doyle; "Pictures of English Society," Du Maurier; "Gems from George Eliot"; "Noble Thoughts," Epictetus; "Worldly Wisdom," Franklin; "Goethe Gallery" (pictures only); "Vicar of Wakefield," Goldsmith; "Dolly Dialogues," Hope; "Frisolous Cupid"; "Men of Mark"; "Sport Royal"; "The Albany Depot," "A Chance Acquaintance," Howells; "History of England from 1795-1806," Hughes; "Found and Lost," Jacobi; "Ras-selas," Johnson; "English Literature, Classical Period, Modern Period, and Mediæval Literature," Lawrence; "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," Maclaren; "Red Star," McManus; "The Limerick Up-to-date Book," Mumford; "Songs," Nairne; "Rubáiyát," Omar Khayyám; "Charlotte Temple," Rawson; "Adopting an Abandoned Farm," Sanborn; "Novels by Eminent Hands," Thackeray; "Sure," Towns- end; "Widows, Grave and Otherwise."

## REQUESTS.

1. It has been a long time since I have received anything from *The Cheerful Letter*. Will some one please send me a dictionary? I should appreciate pieces for patchwork, and any good reading. I wish to thank those that remembered me quite a while ago, and hope to hear from them once more, as I have lost their addresses. I live in the country with my father and mother and am confined at home almost all my time. Minnie Little, Oakboro, North Carolina.

2. "The Daisy Chain" is asked for by Mrs. Lena Hedgecock, Tellico Plains, Tennessee.

3. Miss Olive Teague, R. F. D. 2, Boomer, North Carolina, is a helpless invalid living in a lonely mountain region, and she would be deeply grateful for any scraps, books, or magazines; anything to cheer and help pass the pain-laden hours will be a godsend to her. This request is sent by a friend.

4. I thank my *Cheerful Letter* friends for all the reading they have sent me. You don't know how happy it makes me when I get a good book or some magazine to read. I live alone with my blind son. I should like to get some good reading. Bound books would suit me; I should get the story all at once. Mrs. Isabel Bailey, Toronto, Kansas.

5. *The Ladies' Home Journal* and any other good reading are asked for by Mrs. Walter L. Burleigh, Madison Heights, Virginia.

6. I wish to thank all who have sent me reading through *The Cheerful Letter*, as I am not able to write to each separately. I still hope to be remembered. I seldom get out anywhere on account of my health. I have five children to care for; the three oldest ones are boys aged thirteen, eleven, and eight; my girls are five and a half and two and a half. Any reading, pictures, or cards sent me for the family will be greatly appreciated. Mrs. Leonard Blankenship, Whittier Depot, Virginia.

7. *The Literary Digest* is asked for by Nathan T. Hale, Polly, Kentucky.

8. I wish to thank those who have sent me reading in the past, and I hope they will still remember me in the future. It has been a long while since I heard from my *Cheerful Letter* friends; but winter is closing in on us now and I greatly wish to be remembered by them when I need their help most. I should be very glad of some good reading suitable for myself and children aged from two to sixteen years. Also quilt pieces of all kinds would be greatly appreciated. I should like to have some friend send me *The Cheerful Letter*, as I haven't received any for quite a while. Mrs. S. M. Trevey, Snowden, Virginia.

9. A dear friend has told me of the work of the *Cheerful Letter* Book Club,

I am a country boy, sixteen years of age, and my home is in one of the poorest sections of the country in North Carolina. My mother is dead, and my father has no property, not even a horse. We live in a little house on a farmer's plantation and work for him on his farm. I also do saw-mill work. I and three of the four children younger than I have been converted, and trust we are ready to meet our dear mother in the Saviour's bright home. I have felt for a long time that the Lord had a work for me to do. I may have to preach the gospel. I have no books. I cannot go to school. I cannot buy any books, as it is all we can do to live. My father leads the prayer services at Riverside Church. He has no Bible except a very old one that is badly torn. Please remember him and send such books as you can spare to him and to me. Please send me a reference Bible for my father. I should be glad to receive old school-books, especially a dictionary. I refer you to my pastor, Rev. Grover C. Phillips, Bear Creek, North Carolina. James M. Newell, Kanoy, North Carolina.

10. It has been some time since I received anything from the *Cheerful Letter* friends. I wish to thank those who have remembered me in the past, and I should be glad to get more books or magazines. Mrs. W. R. Ratcliff, Athens, Texas, Route 2.

11. I wish to thank the *Cheerful Letter* friends for the reading they have sent me the past year. I should appreciate some good needlework magazine. My son would like any of John Fox's books; also "Quo Vadis," "David Copperfield," or "Ben Hur." We will pass the reading on to some one else who loves to read good literature. Mrs. D. S. Shaw, Kerr, Sampson County, North Carolina.

12. Mrs. Ethel Martin, Axton, Virginia, mother of three small girls, asks for A B C books for the children, and books or magazines for herself and husband.

13. Miss Alberta Richardson, Wadesboro, North Carolina, Route 1, Box 81, asks for reading for herself and her mother.

14. Mrs. Mary E. Shelton, Campbell, North Carolina, R. F. D. 1, Box 41, wishes to thank her friends for the good reading

they have sent her. She is a great sufferer from rheumatism; hopes to be remembered at the Christmas holidays with books and magazines. She would like some of Mary J. Holmes's writings, also *Needlecraft* and *The Pictorial Review*; and *St. Nicholas* or any nice story-book for the little girl.

15. I should be glad of reading and cards for myself and little sisters. I should also appreciate scraps of any kind for my quilts. We live among the mountains and get very lonesome. For reference I send Rev. R. S. Whittington, Ashland, West Virginia. Miss Belva Church, Ashland, West Virginia.

16. Mrs. Frances Davis, 2126 Queen Street, Bellingham, Washington, a young woman living in a new home far from all friends and relatives, is very lonely. She has a boy three years old who has tuberculosis of the spine, and a baby two months old. She will appreciate good reading, and cards for the boy.

17. Mr. Norman W. Aimer, R. D. 2, Rochester, Washington, living on a farm and unable to get away for any length of time, will be very glad of good reading.

18. Many years ago my name was sent in to *The Cheerful Letter*. I gained two valued correspondents, both of whom are now dead; and for several years I have had no reading matter sent me. I live on a farm far from town and have not the money to buy books. I should like to get reading matter for myself, my son, and my twelve-year-old daughter. Am so anxious for the *Youth's Companion* or any good magazine. Mrs. Lily Venable, Camden, Arkansas, Route 3.

19. Miss Dora White, Greensboro, North Carolina, Route 3, hopes the readers will not forget a lonely friend. She is grateful for reading sent in the past.

20. I should be glad to receive any kind of reading, as I get very lonesome while the children are at school. Mrs. Charles W. Foley, Elamsville, Virginia, R. F. D. 1.

21. Kind *Cheerful Letter* friends, I get very lonesome and should be very grateful for papers, books, and pieces for my quilts. I should also like a Bible in large print. I am getting old and very weakly

and am not able to do work that is hard. Anything to cheer me will be greatly appreciated. For reference please apply to Rev. W. E. Lackey, Elamsville, Virginia. Miss Lucinda Pendleton, Dodson, Virginia.

22. I am a widow living with my daughter and two little grandchildren. I am not very strong, but have to help make a living. I should be very glad of some cheer. Should like a Bible in large print and good books of any kind. I should especially like to have a Life of Christ. The two little grandchildren would be pleased to have cards and picture-books. I should also like any pieces for patchwork, and any good paper to read. For reference please write to Rev. Alexander Bryant, Buffalo Ridge, Virginia. Mrs. Ellen Pilsom, Buffalo Ridge, Virginia.

23. I wish to thank the friends who have been so kind to me in sending me reading during the past year. I should like to write to each one and thank them, but some of the magazines had no name on them. I hope the friends will continue to think of me and my children. Mrs. Fannie Thompson, Unionville, Virginia, Route 2, Box 31.

### THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

#### WHAT ONE MOTHER SAYS.

(Three questions were raised in the November number of *The Cheerful Letter*: 1. Would you punish a child who voluntarily confessed some wrong-doing, without any apparent fear of punishment? 2. How would you deal with a child who told lies because he was afraid of punishment for faults? 3. What have you found the best way of curing a fear of the dark? One of our correspondents sends this interesting reply.—Ed.)

While scanning an article in your paper the above questions came under my observation, and, as a mother, I answer them "according to the light that is in me."

In regard to the first, is it conceivable that a mother could have any wavering in the matter? To punish a child who of his own free will confesses a fault, surely seems an abuse of innocent confidence. "With reservations"—I hear a contrary voice say. What reservations? Well, sad to say, there are children reared in a sophisticated atmosphere, who are cunning enough to know that the confession will save them from punishment, and they prefer the pose of humility to the

chastisement to come. How very sad that young children should be without candor, the sign of innocence! Only parents are to blame for this sad abortion of child character, the result of false ideals in the home.

But to get back to the question, Would you punish a child owning his fault in all simplicity? There can, of course, never be an absolute answer to any query. We must know the circumstances, the wrong done, the gravity of the results, the motives for erring. So often children do wrong without reflection and without intention. There are many trivial wrong-doings, which, though to be mentioned and corrected, do not merit punishment and certainly not chastisement, as hasty and over-rigid parents are wont to believe. We must not expect perfection in young, little animals (as children are) when our own shortcomings surprise us daily after years of reasoning effort to correct them. One rule is infallible: Criticise, punish, correct, but in all kindness of heart and not in excess of zeal.

At first sight it would seem apparent from the question that the child in confessing his wrong-doing without fear of punishment is supposed either to be innocent of the error of his fault or without a preconception of what to expect or not to expect from the parent. Children, we all know, are great character-readers. If, in all frankness, he admits his misconduct, which he knows to be such, he will expect censure from a careful parent. If he is ignorant of the wrong of what he has done, it seems on the surface of it that the parent or older person has only to kindly explain the matter to him.

Now to the second question: How would you deal with a child who told lies because he was afraid of punishment?

A child is prone to falsehood when he fears, as any weak animal is to stratagem when afraid. It is a law of nature,—deception when strength fails,—the law of the jungle, the voice of instinct. Nevertheless,—you may say,—it is not to be tolerated or for an instant excused. I personally believe that the child who lies to father or mother to escape punishment has on previous occasions received injustice at their hands. The chastisement of a loving parent will *not* inspire fear in a child, but weld child and parent even closer. I have proved it as the mother of three children. I have severely chastised my children, and yet they of

their own free-will have entwined me in their arms very shortly after the tears have ceased to flow. They feel by instinct the beat of the mother's heart and her loyalty to them, in spite of all. I believe no child fears a loyal, loving parent, and he will consequently not tell a falsehood through any motive of fear; and, aside from fear, what would push a child to lying? Father and mother, search your own conscience before you place judgment on the child!

The third question is: What have you found the best way of curing a fear of the dark?

All children seem to have this fear. I believe it is a natural fear. Darkness is mystery, and throughout the history of the world man has feared the unknown. I believe if a child is never intimidated,—which is a very cruel practice,—he will unconsciously outgrow his fear of the dark. The reading of gruesome and fantastic stories, the discussion of sensational news, murders, and so forth, attendance at blood-curdling "movies" do much to aggravate the fear of the dark. Let the children enjoy the privilege of a sane home, considerate relatives, pleasant and healthy conversation, cheerful story-books, and the food for a frightened imagination will be lacking. There will be no trembling and anguish at bedtime, and the powers of darkness will gradually cease to terrify. "Don't be afraid" is useless to say. Lead the child yourself into the dark hall or room. Speak gently to him. Talk to him about pleasant things: Give him a candle or turn on the light in his bedroom or wherever the "hobgoblins" get him. Gradually he will lose fear. At least, my children have lost their fear in this way. I hesitate to say that they would not be afraid, as yet, to go down cellar alone in the dark, but I myself do not particularly like to go there without a candle. Why force a child to do what is inexpedient, simply as a test of bravery? Explain to a child what darkness is and what light. Read to him the first chapter of Genesis.

ONE MOTHER.

It ain't no use to grumble and complain;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.  
When God sorts out the weather, and  
sends rain,  
Why,—rain's my choice!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

## CHILDREN'S CLASSICS.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

(Concluded.)

Francis's friends who had learned to know him well saw that he had really learned a wonderful secret of happiness; so one after another came to join him, and to help in his work so far as they were able. Some were poor, uneducated workmen. Some were rich and learned. They all lived in the same simple fashion, not worrying about meals or lodgings, but trusting that while they were serving, the Lord He would provide as much as was really necessary.

Of course there were already Christian churches in Italy then,—in fact there were a great many, and some of them were very grand and beautiful; but in too many cases both priests and people had somehow lost sight of the more important parts of the gospel, so that the religious life of the towns and villages was wretchedly far from what it ought to be. The common people had no way of learning through books, for at that time there was not a printed book in the whole world, and none but a few very grand folk could afford to pay for copies of the Gospels written out by hand.

Francis and his helpers did their best to wake up such of the priests who had grown dull and careless. He used to talk with farmers in the fields and with merchants in the village markets, and with young people at the country festivals, just as his Master, Christ, used to do in Palestine, long before. And the absolute honesty of the man, his own bubbling happiness, and his devout love of God did somehow help thousands and thousands of other people to see better what is worth while in life, and to realize more personally that God cares for each man and woman and child.

Francis was very fond of flowers and trees, animals and birds. He had a really extraordinary way of understanding all sorts of living creatures and making friends with them. Stories of his life say that he could make all sorts of creatures understand and obey him. At one time he and some of the Brothers (as his followers were called) were singing psalms in a grove beside the road, when a number of little birds on the tree-boughs made such a twittering and chirping as to confuse the worshippers. Francis

said to them "Sister birds, cease your song now until we have given our praises unto God," and the birds kept silence until it was time for them to sing praises too. At another time he preached a sermon to the birds, telling them of the goodness of the One Who made them.

One of the most celebrated stories of Saint Francis (for so he was called in later years) was about a ferocious wolf that had terrorized one of the country towns, not only stealing and devouring sheep, but even attacking men and boys. Francis had heard of the beast and went out on the hills to meet him, saying, as the dreadful creature drew near, "Come hither, brother Wolf; I charge thee in Christ's name, that thou harm not me nor any one." And, lo! the ravenous beast came and lay down at his feet like a friendly dog. Then, while the people stood about, looking on in amazement, Francis explained to brother Wolf how wickedly he had been behaving, and told him that, if he would mend his ways, the people would gladly provide him with food to satisfy his honest hunger. To this brother Wolf agreed, putting his paw in Francis's hand in sign of honorable agreement.

Then Francis turned to the people, showing them how even a dumb brute can forsake evil and do right; and he urged them all likewise to give up their own greed and selfishness and cruelty and to live henceforth in brotherly kindness, for the sake of the good Father of men and beasts.

Francis lived a long life and a wonderfully happy life, in spite of having no home, no property, no money,—nothing of his own except a God to love and a work to do. One of the last things he did when he was dying was to pray for Assisi, the old town where he had been a boy, and ask for a blessing on its homes and its people. The influence of his years of patient, faithful teaching had by that time spread far and wide, not only through Italy, but into many other lands as well. Some of his friends, who were educated men, wrote down an account of his life, as they remembered it. And so to-day, all over the world, people have heard of Francis of Assisi.

Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns. I am thankful that thorns have roses!—*Alphonse Karr.*

## NATURAL SCIENCE.

## OTHER SUNS AND WORLDS.

Thousands of stars can be seen with our unaided eyes. Millions more have been seen and catalogued by trained observers with telescopes. The beauty of them makes us all feel a wondering delight and awe. The old Hebrew poet felt it, when he wrote the nineteenth Psalm. One of our own English poets felt it when he wrote a poem which is reprinted this month in "The Still Hour."

Among all the twinkling millions of stars there is one whose direct, practical service to us earth-dwellers is greater than that of all the rest. As the sun, besides giving us light and heat, tells us by his place in the sky which way is north or south, east or west, so one particular star, if we know how to find it, can give us our direction at night. Far, far back in human history travellers by land and by sea have looked to the Pole Star (or the North Star) as their guide.

Everybody has noticed that the groups of glittering stars change their places in the sky according to the time of night, somewhat as the sun changes his place in the heavens according to the time of day. Some star-groups "rise" as the moon does, cross the sky in a long, sweeping curve, and "set." Some few groups never do "set," or pass out of sight (at least for observers in the northern latitudes where most of the *Cheerful Letters* are read), but move round and round in circular paths through one part of the sky. Of such star groups, or constellations, one of the most readily found is commonly called the Great Dipper. About nine o'clock in the nights of early January (half an hour earlier in the middle of the month), it is easy to discover seven particularly bright stars in this position, a little way

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above the horizon or sky-edge. The long handle of the Dipper reaches crookedly downward toward the horizon. The bowl of the Dipper is seen sidewise, as if it were an axe rather than a dipper. Notice especially the two bright stars that mark the side farthest from the handle. Those are called the "pointers" because they point to the Pole Star. Follow with your eye in the direction where those two lead, and you find (about as far distant as the whole length of the Dipper and about half-way between the horizon and a point straight overhead) another conspicuously bright star. That is the Pole Star, or North Star. Whatever the season of the year or the time of night, that star shines in that same part of the sky, the true North. It is an infallible guide for the traveller.

The reason why it makes no evident change of position is that the (imaginary) axis of our revolving earth happens to point directly toward it; that is to say, it is directly over the north pole of our earth; so its apparent position does not change, any more than the central point of the axle of a revolving wheel.

But of course our earth's revolution does make the Dipper seem to move in a circle, round and round the Pole Star. It is interesting to watch it and see in how many different positions we can recognize it at different hours of the night and different seasons of the year. Sometimes the bowl is below and the handle above. Sometimes the bowl is right side up, and at other times upside down. But it can always be found.

When one is quite sure of the Dipper, it is easy to find another of the many constellations, called Cassiopeia, or "the lady in the chair." It is shaped like a broad, sprawling W. Wherever the Dipper may be at any given time, Cassiopeia will be found at the opposite side of the Pole Star, and about as far from it as the Dipper is. The W too may be found in a variety of positions, but observant eyes soon learn to detect it.

So many,—so many stars! Their number passes the limits of the imagination! Yet each one is a sun, shining, as our sun does, with light of its own. It is chiefly because of their immense distances that they seem so much smaller and fainter than our sun, though, indeed, they probably vary a great deal in size and original brightness. That broad belt of light known as the Milky Way, reaching quite

across the night sky, is made up of countless myriads of other stars, many of them vastly farther away than those that we see separately and distinctly. It is their inconceivably great distance that makes them seem to blur together.

What we call "morning stars" and "evening stars" are, we know, not stars at all; they give out no light of their own, but only reflect the light of our sun. They are so much nearer to us than the stars that they give an effect of greater brightness. They are the earth's sister planets, revolving around that nearest star which we call "the sun," each following a path of its own, and being sometimes nearer, sometimes farther; sometimes on the same side of the sun as ourselves, sometimes at the other side of the sun. In old times people used to call them "the wandering stars," because of the strange variations of time and place for their coming in sight.

In early January four of those sister-worlds are to be in sight each clear morning,—Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, and Mars. It is usually easy to distinguish Mars, because that planet's reflected light has a very slightly reddish color. Venus will be seen in the eastern part of the sky, and Jupiter and Saturn farther west,—that is, nearer to setting. It is interesting to remember, while seeing their beautiful light before sunrise, that Venus is not much smaller than our own earth, and Jupiter and Saturn are both larger than the earth. Jupiter is, in one respect, better off than our world, for it has four moons of its own, instead of a single moon. It usually requires a telescope or a very good field-glass to see them, but some very sharp eyes have been able to make out the tiny dots of these moons, without the aid of any glass.

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Do not dare to be so absorbed in your own life, so wrapped up in listening to the sound of your own hurrying wheels, that all this vast, pathetic music, made up of the mingled joy and sorrow of your fellow-men, shall not find your heart and claim it and make you rejoice to give yourself for them. Be sure that ambition and charity will both grow mean unless they are both inspired and exalted by religion. Energy, love and faith,—these make the perfect man.—*Phillips Brooks.*

## THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

V.

## NUMERICAL PUZZLE—SOME RECENT BOOKS.

1 12, 1, 2, 18, 1, 4, 15, 18 4, 15, 3, 20, 15, 18.

20, 8, 5 19, 20, 1, 14, 4, 1, 20, 4 2, 5, 1, 18, 5, 18, 19.

20, 8, 5 23, 1, 18 18, 15, 13, 1, 14, 3, 5-15, 6-20, 8, 5-19, 1, 12, 22, 1, 20, 9, 15, 14 1, 18, 13, 25.

19, 5, 5, 9, 14, 7 16, 5, 14, 14, 19, 25, 12, 22, 1, 14, 9, 1.

## I.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DIAMONDS.

1. In Washington; a jewel; one of the United States; to spell; in Washington.

2. In Pennsylvania; organized fighting; a city in Europe; to tear; in Pennsylvania.

—*Exchange.*

## II.

## ACROSTIC.

1. A fruit common in this climate.

2. A fruit of the South.

3. A fruit which grows on vines.

4. A fruit of Southern Europe.

5. A kind of peach.

6. A fruit resembling a plum.

The initials give the name of the God-  
dess of Fruits.—*The Beacon.*

## III.

## BLANKS

To be filled by the same word be-  
headed:—

1. Give me a glass of — —.

2. There is not a — of truth in the —.

3. The tame — — were clipped.

4. Put a — — the table.

5. A knight tried to — — on his  
finger.—*Our Boys and Girls.*

## IV.

## A SQUARE.

1. One of the points of the compass.

2. A synonym for yard.

3. A synonym for prophet.

4. A synonym for bog.

*Answers to puzzles in the December  
number.*

## I.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Suwaroff.

Eugénie.

Belshazzar.

Alfred.

Sobieski.

Trajan.

Isabella.

Aurelian.

Nimrod.

Sebastian. Ferdinand.

## II.

## CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. Alfred Tennyson.

2. Alfred Austin.

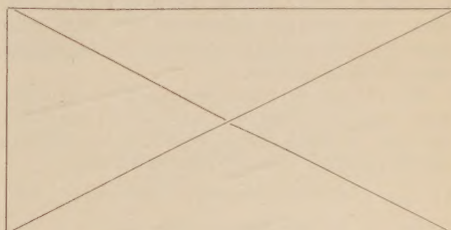
3. Robert Burns.

4. Edwin Arnold.

5. Dante Alighieri.

## III.

## PUZZLE.



## IV.

PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TOWARD MEN.

## THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

Chairman of the Cheerful Letter Exchange,  
Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way,  
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Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange,  
Mrs. Francis Hastings, Kendal Green, Mass.

Editor of The Cheerful Letter, Miss L.  
Freeman Clarke, 5 Brimmer Street, Boston,  
Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols,  
25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

## OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of *The Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS.

In sending subscriptions for *The Cheerful Letter*, address The Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Subscriptions, 50 cents a year.

## IMPORTANT NOTICES.

## OFFERS.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

## REQUESTS.

THE ATTENTION OF READERS IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

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The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

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The Home Study Committee of the Cheerful Letter Exchange is planning for more efficient work.

Let it be understood that there are no special courses; the instruction is given by volunteers.

Our aim is to help in subjects in which one is deficient; to help one fit himself for a higher grade of work.

We have books used in the schools here which can be used for supplementary work in the schoolroom or in the home.

Make all applications to the Home Study Work, Mrs. Elmer E. Hudson, 4 Alveston Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

## MUSIC.

The music sent out by this department has in the past given much pleasure; and now that there is more and more interest in "community singing" the calls for help may naturally be expected to be greater.

Offers and requests should be sent to Mrs. Thomas Lacey, 35 East 30th Street, New York City, or to All Souls Church, Fourth Avenue and 20th Street, New York City.